DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 345 568 FL 020 395

AUTHOR Pilkenton, David
TITLE Career Spanish at Mesa State College.
PUB DATE 19 Mar 91
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for World Business and the Professions (10th, Ypsilanti, MI, April 3-5, 1991). Best copy available.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Careers; College Second Language Programs; Course Descriptions; Employment Opportunities; Higher Education; *Language Proficiency; *Languages for Special Purposes; *Second Language Instruction; *Spanish; State Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Mesa State College CO

ABSTRACT

The development and results of Career Spanish instruction at Mesa State College in Colorado from 1975 to 1991 are described. The class is an individualized, career-oriented class for students who have only 3 to 6 semester hours available for foreign language study and an interest in particular vocational applications of Spanish. With no prerequisites, the class allows students to enroll at the beginning of any semester regardless of their career interest or level of ability. After a 6-8 week introduction to Spanish, beginning students transfer to the career option of their choice; those who do not need the introduction begin work immediately on their chosen option with the help of bilingual aides or paraprofessionals. Available options include agriculture, airlines, automotive services, business, elementary education, emergency medical technicians, engineering, hotel management, law enforcement, medical office work, mining engineering, nursing, petroleum engineering, pre-dentistry, pre-law, pre-medicine, pre-optometry, pre-pharmacy, physical therapy, radiologic technology, recreation and leisure services, restaurant management, secretarial services, social services, Spanish for business and professional travelers, and travel agents. Increased enrollment, low attrition rate, students' above-average test scores, and results of both formal and informal follow-up student opinion surveys and evaluations indicate positive responses to the class. The Career Spanish concept is adaptable to either 2- or 4-year institutions of higher education. (LB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED345568

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Voght G.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CAREER SPANISH AT MESA STATE COLLEGE

March 19, 1991

By
David Pilkenton
Emeritus Associate Professor
of Foreign Languages

Mesa State College
Grand Junction, Colorado

Paper presented at the Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for World Business and the Professions (10th, Ypsilanti, MI, April 3-5, 1991).

FL 020 395

2 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OUTLINE

Summary

Background (Intro)

- Profile of Grand Junction
- Mesa State College
- The Foreign Language Program

The Development of the Career Spanish Course

- Origin of Career Spanish
- Enrollment
- The Teachers, Aids, and Students

Structure

- Student Grouping
- Materials
- Options
- Methodology
- Testing

Evaluations of the Program

- Likes
- Problems
- Needs
- Resolution

Success

Adaptability of the Program at Other Schools

SUMMARY

This paper describes the development and results of Career Spanish instruction at Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colorado from 1975 to 1991. The Career Spanish class at Mesa State College is an individualized, career-oriented class for students who have only 3 to 6 semester hours available for foreign language study and an interest in a particular vocational application of Spanish. The class has no prerequisites and allows students to enroll at the beginning of any semester regardless of their career interest or level of ability. Students may take the class for 1 or 2 semesters as their curriculums permit or require. Unique principally because of its acceptance of students with no previous study of Spanish and its large number of options, the class has grown from 26 students in 6 groups at its inception in the fall of 1975 to a high of 62 students in 22 groups in the spring of 1989. Presently, 50 students are enrolled in 19 groups for the spring of 1991. Over the past 5 years, the average enrollment has been 36 students in 15 groups per semester.

After a 6 to 8 week introduction to Spanish, beginning students transfer to the career option of their choice. Those students who do not need the introduction begin work immediately on their chosen option with the help of bilingual aides or paraprofessionals. Available options include agriculture, airlines, automotive services, business, elementary education, emergency medical technician, engineering, hotel management, law

enforcement, medical office secretary, mining engineering, nursing, petroleum engineering, pre-dentistry, pre-law, pre-medicine, pre-optometry, pre-pharmacy, physical therapy, radiologic technology, recreation and leisure services, restaurant management, secretarial services, social services, Spanish for business and professional travelers, and travel agents.

The increased enrollment, low attrition rate, students' above-average test scores, and results of both formal and informal follow-up student opinion surveys and evaluations indicate positive responses to the class. The Career Spanish concept is adaptable to either 2 or 4 year institutions of higher education.

BACKGROUND

Profile of Grand Junction, Colorado

Grand Junction, Colorado is located in the Grand Valley at the junction of the Colorado and Gunnison rivers on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains halfway between Denver and Salt Lake City. The city is surrounded by famous scenic areas. To the south rise the cliffs and canyons of the Colorado National Monument and to the north are the Bookcliffs. To the east is the Grand Mesa rising to a height of 10,500 feet. A half-day drive will take you to sites of dinosaur remains, Indian artifacts, or several famous ski areas. The early history of Grand Junction (much like that of many western towns) is replete with gunfights,

political battles and local rivalries. By the turn of the century, many of the businesses that serve the community today had begun, and by the mid-twentieth century, the city was headquarters for the exploration of uranium. Today, Grand Junction continues economic growth with increased emphasis on recreaton and tourist-related businesses.

The Hispanic population of Grand Junction, like that of many cities of the west, includes those whose families have lived in the area for 3 to 4 generations, as well as an increasing number of immigrant workers, ranch hands, and others who have recently come from Mexico. The Spanish-speaking population of the city is approximately 10 to 15 percent of the total; a population large enough to support bilingual education in five schools in kindergarten through third grade. In addition to Mesa State College, institutions of higher education include Western Colorado College (a private business school), Technical Trades Institute, and a continuing education branch of the University of Colorado.

Mesa State College

Mesa State College began in 1925 as a state junior college and became a 4-year college in 1975. With a student body of approximately 1,600 students, it occupies a 46-acre campus near the center of the city. Today, the college is comprised of six schools: Business, Humanities and Fine Arts, Industry and Technology, Natural Science and Mathematics, Nursing and Allied Health, and Social and Behavioral Science. These schools offer

over 90 different academic programs at the 4-year baccalaureate, 2-year associate, and certificate levels. Additionally, the Continuing Education program and out-reach programs offer classes for adults, special night classes, and off-campus classes.

The Foreign Language Program

The foreign language program is administered by the Department of Languages and Literature within the school of Humanities and Fine Arts. Currently, the department employs 2 full-time, 2 half-time, 1 quarter-time, and 3 part-time foreign language teachers. Foreign language students are drawn from all quarters; however, the majority is made up of the approximately 800 candidates for the Bachelor of Arts degree who are required to complete at least 6 semester hours of a modern language other than English. Lower-division credit courses in French, German, Russian, and Spanish are offered 3 days each week. No upper-division foreign language classes are regularly scheduled. However, 1 or 2 may occasionally be given if enrollment projections justify the offering. Typically, 1 section of each level of French, German, and Russian is offered every semester. Five sections of each semester of first-year Spanish and one section of each semester of second-year Spanish are regularly offered. One section of Career Spanish is offered each semester.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAREER SPANISH COURSE

Origin of Career Spanish

The idea for the Career Spanish class grew out of a series of

seminars on innovation in higher education offered at Mesa College during the spring of 1973 while the college was still a junior college. Each participant in the seminar was required to develop a plan for implementing innovative programs at the college in the participant's field. After consideration of all the ideas generated in these seminars, implementing a Career Spanish course seemed to be the one that offered the greatest potential for being innovative and for improving the size and service capacity of the Spanish program at Mesa College.

The Career Spanish concept seemed to meet all the criteria for innovation as described by the seminar speakers. It could be student-centered, individualized, efficient, and effective. It could also provide for diverse offerings, be relevant to on-the-job needs of students and, most importantly, make Spanish language study available to all the students, rather than to just a few. In 1973, the Spanish program at Mesa provided courses suitable for only 466 students enrolled in 14 liberal arts or social science majors. These students represented only one-quarter of the student body. Three-quarters of the student body (1,287 students) were enrolled in 52 lower-division majors other than those in liberal arts and social science. These lower-division majors did not make a sufficient number of elective hours available for the students to take the standard 15 quarter-hour, year-long, beginning comprehensive (all 4 skills) Spanish course offered by the College at that time.

The proposal for the new course was submitted to the Mesa College Curriculum Committee in the fall of 1974 and approved in

the spring of 1975. The proposal called for the implementation of an individualized, limited-objective (understanding and speaking skills only), 3 credit hour, career-oriented course designed for students in non-liberal arts and social science fields and in 1 and 2 year vocational technical programs who usually had a limited number of elective hours and an interest in a particular vocational application of Spanish. The proposal called for the new course to have no prerequisites; to allow students to enroll for any quarter regardless of their particular interest or level of ability; and to take the course for 1, 2, or 3 quarters as their curriculum permitted.

Further aims of the Career Spanish course were to afford lower- and upper-division students the opportunity to: 1) study Spanish at all levels of instruction, including introductory, 2) develop proficiency in listening and speaking Spanish, 3) study the specialized vocabulary and phrases they would most likely encounter in frequently occurring situations in their chosen fields, 4) study this material at their own pace within flexible periods of time, 5) achieve at least 80 percent mastery of the material studied for the majority of students, and 6) gain an appreciation of the Hispanic culture and life-style in most options, particulary as these contrast with those of the Anglo lifestyle.

During the 1974-75 academic year, when the Career Spanish course was considered and approved, the college was also preparing to offer in the fall of 1975 the first in a series of new baccalaureate degree programs that the state had authorized

the previous year. Since the Career Spanish course was designed for Mesa State College as a junior college, there was concern about its applicability (and viability) at Mesa State College as a senior college. To attempt to assess the institutional attitude toward the course given the college's change in roles, the course was discussed with the Deans and available faculty of all six schools during the summer of 1975. All those interviewed were pleased to have their opinions considered and stated their belief that the program should be as valid in a 4-year school as in a 2-year one. They liked the fact that the course was tailor-made to address their students' specific career needs and that students would have something practical and useful to take with them after graduations.

Enrollment

Enrollment in the Career Spanish class over the years has varied from 9 students to 62 students per quarter and semester. Twenty-six students enrolled in the first class offered in the fall of 1975. During the fall semester of 1983, an all-time low of 9 students enrolled in the class. But, during the spring semester of 1989, an all-time high of 62 students enrolled in 22 different groups. A group is defined as any number of students who are all enrolled in the same option at the same level (beginning, intermediate, or advanced) and who are covering the material at the same pace (special, regular, or fast). In the present semester, 50 students are enrolled in 19 different groups. The average enrollment throughout the history of the

class has been 36 students in 15 groups each quarter or semester. However, more current enrollment estimates are obtained by looking at the average enrollment for the past 4 years which indicate 30-36 students in 15 different groups per semester. As the numbers suggest, the average enrollment in a group is only 2 to 3 students, with some groups consisting of only 1 student and others consisting of up to a dozen students.

Since its implementation, 907 students have enrolled in the Career Spanish class. The most popular option has been nursing Spanish, with 139 students enrolled at beginning, intermediate, or advanced levels of instruction. Of the 907 total students who have enrolled in the class to date, 465 or 51 percent have been classified as beginners; 420 or 46 percent have been classified as intermediate; and 22 or slightly under 3 percent have been classified as advanced students.

The next most popular option has been the non-advertised and non-promoted Spanish for business and professional travelers, with 137 students enrolled at various levels for 2 options. Because this option is not as career specific as the others, it includes those students who have no declared major, those for whom no specific career option has been developed, or those who are not interested in taking another, more suitable Spanish class. These students include fine arts majors, humanities majors, foreign students with undeclared majors, general education majors, journalism and mass communication majors, an occasional physical and/or mathematics science major, and selected studies majors. This more generic option has, over the

years during quarters or semesters of low total enrollment, made the difference between offering or not offering the class for those interested in the core career-specific options.

The third most popular option has been that of Spanish for social service majors, with 113 students enrolled in approximately equal numbers at the beginning and intermediate levels. The fourth most popular option has been that for travel, recreation and hospitality majors, with 112 students enrolling in the different emphases available to these majors. Fifty-seven of the 112 total were able to enroll in the "combined" emphasis areas: 39 enrolled in the airlines emphasis, 13 in the hotel management emphasis, 7 in an emphasis for prospective travel agents, and 4 in the restaurant-management emphasis.

In further descending order of popularity, but no less important than the preceding ones, are the following options: fifth, law enforcement, with a total of 93 students; sixth, elementary education, with 83 students; seventh, business, with 67 students; eighth, recreation and leisure services, with 37 students; and ninth, an independent study option, largely for 3 bilingual aides who chose to be compensated for their services by enrolling in and receiving credit for the Career Spanish class rather than by some other means. Rounding out the top 10 most popular options is that of agriculture, with a total of 19 students for this option over the years.

Options which have enrolled less than 20 students throughout the history of the class include pre-medicine (16), mining engineering (15), child care (12), pre-law (7), radiologic

technology (7), secretarial science (6), physical therapy (4), pre-dentistry (4), medical office secretary (3), engineering (3), emergency medical technician (2), petroleum engineering (2), pre-optometry (2), pre-pharmacy (1), [illegible] body (1). These low numbers should not be construed as a lack of interest in these options but rather a lack of promotion. The pressing needs of those students who have enrolled in the class voluntarily have precluded promotion of these less-frequently chosen options. There is also the problem of obtaining the additional qualified bilingual aides that would be needed. However, there is a tremendous potential for growth of these pre-professional and vocational-technical options should the opportunity for developing them present itself.

There are other low enrollment options that have been offered in the past which will take more than promotion to revive. The Spanish for child care majors option appears not to flourish under the semi-independent study format of the Career Spanish class tutored by non-professional student aides. It did well, however, in the early 1970's as an experimental career education evening class under the tutelage of a professional child care bilingual aide. Unfortunately, she left Grand Junction, taking her materials with her, and she has not been replaced. The lack of interest in the mining and petroleum engineering options over the past 10 years is believed to be related to the waning fortunes of these 2 industries in this area. Two other options currently being considered for discontinuation are the recreation and leisure services and pre-law; the first because of the lack

of suitable materials beyond the first module and the second because of the lack of suitable entry level material for the first module.

The Teachers, Aides, and Students

In addition to evaluating all students and visiting all groups as often as possible during the class hour, the teacher is responsible for promoting and occasionally defending the program; ordering, reviewing, and selecting materials; writing materials; making tapes; counseling students on their choice of options and tracts (special, regular or fast); teaching the pre-career introductory option and one or two post-introductory, beginning career options depending upon the number of bilingual aides available; preparing semester-long schedules of assignments for each option; preparing suggested daily lesson plans for the aides of all options; maintaining a folder for all options containing supplementary material, special instructions, and notes from the aides; and selecting and supervising the paraprofessionals and bilingual aides who teach all the other options.

However important the work of the teacher, the real key to any success the Career Spanish course may enjoy lies in the contributions of the aides who help the students master the assigned material. The bilingual aides are Mesa State College students with native or near-native skills who are selected for their availability at required times; their dependability and punctuality; and their ability to follow directions, work with minimal supervision, speak and read Spanish, relate well to

students, and "keep things going" in class. They are located through searches for Spanish surnamed students qualified for work-study awards, through referrals from other teachers, and through interviews with regular users as well as "drop-ins" at the Foreign Language Laboratory. For every class, the teacher provides each aide or paraprofessional with a suggested lesson plan and a strategy for conducting each of the two options for which the aide is responsible.

The linguistic capabilities of the aides vary greatly from year to year, and even semester to semester. However, the abilities and experience of the 9 aides who have been helping with Career Spanish during the current semester are fairly representative. Five of the 9 are native speakers of the language - 3 of Standard Latin-American Spanish, 1 of South-western United States Spanish, and 1 of Castilian Spanish. Three attended Spanish-speaking schools: 1 through elementary school, another through "preparatoria," and the third graduated from the Medical School of the University of San Luis Potosi as a surgeon. Needless to say, this latter student assists the intermediate and advanced nursing students. In all cases, an attempt is made to match the aides with the students they tutor. Aides indicate their preferences for particular groups at the beginning of each semester and provide additional background information. Their preferences are honored whenever possible.

Each of the 4 current non-native speaking aides have had at least 2 years of high school Spanish and 2 additional years of college Spanish. Additionally, all have had some association

with Spanish-speaking people outside the classroom. One aide was raised in New Mexico among the Spanish-speaking, another worked for a number of years in restaurants with Spanish-speaking employees, and the third noted on his application that he had "hosted Argentine students for three weeks at a time every February for the last four years." The fourth non-native Spanish-speaking aide lived in Madrid for a year. There is no special training program for all the aides at present, but there are meetings held with individual aides before class whenever the need arises. Aides are compensated for their services through the work-study program or are awarded 3 credit hours for the Career Spanish class, or for an upper-division independent study foreign language class in some cases.

Students are expected to attend each class at the beginning of the hour for roll call and instructions, after which some of the more advanced students may choose to leave the classroom to work elsewhere. The students are relatively free to choose their own work place as well as work pace. However, the majority of the students stay in the classroom or Foreign Language Laboratory to work individually, in pairs, or with their group. Students are also expected to be present on regularly scheduled test days. If students do miss for some reason, they are expected to take the initiative in making up missed or unmastered lessons.

STRUCTURE

Student Grouping

Beginners are those students who have had no previous

experience with a formal training in Spanish or the experience was long ago and they require a one module "re-introduction" language basics before starting on their chosen career option in the second module of the semester. Intermediates are those students who have sufficient background to start their chosen career option at the onset of the semester in which they enter for the first time or who are beginning students with one semester of Career Spanish behind them and who continue in the Career Spanish program for a second semester. Advanced students are those who come into the program in the fall as intermediates and continue with the program during the spring semester.

Career Spanish students meet in an extra large classroom such as the language laboratory for 50 minutes a day, 3 days a week, 16 weeks each semester. They are free to move the chairs about so that they can sit facing each other or even come and go as their options or abilities permit or require. At the beginning of each semester, students are grouped according to their proficiency and career interests. Those students who have not had any previous study of Spanish are put into a pre-career, beginners-reviewers option taught by the teacher for the first 6 to 8 weeks of the semester. During this phase of the program, these students work on pronunciation, basic vocabulary common to all options, and sufficient grammer to facilitate learning the material in the career options which follow. The students transfer into the career options of their choice at the end of this period for the remaining 8 to 10 weeks of the semester under the tutelage of a bilingual student aide and occasionally a paraprofessional.

Those students who have had Spanish before and who are capable of handling a career option without the benefit of the pre-career introduction to the language, are immediately assigned to their chosen option and are put on a special, regular, or fast pace track according to their ability. Some disabled or handicapped students may be assigned materials at a special (or slow) pace; native speakers desiring to cover a great amount of material in a short time are assigned to a fast or even "super" fast pace; and most non-native intermediate students are assigned material at a regular pace of from 1 to 4 pages of material a day, depending upon the option and assignment. The students are given a draft of their schedules of assignments for the semester before they are finalized and give their approval of both the amount and selection of the material assigned. With few exceptions, students in the Career Spanish course are appreciative of being allowed a say in the design of their programs and are prepared to work hard and abide by their "contracts."

Students may work alone, in pairs, or in conversational circles of anywhere from 3 to 12 students depending on the number of students choosing a particular option. If a bilingual aide is not available on a given day to help a particular individual or group, a more advanced Career Spanish student may be asked to help the intermediate students. In an emergency, one of the stronger students within a group may be asked to coordinate the group's work and serve as a temporary conversaton aide leader. The teacher is available to answer questions, identify errors,

and offer encouragement. More advanced students may work outside of the classroom or language laboratory with their partner, aide, or group. A few advanced students with schedule conflicts may meet with the teacher once a week for reviews and/or tests on assigned material.

As an example of how this grouping works in actual practice, the following is a breakdown of the 24 students in 12 intermediate and advanced groups in the Career Spanish class during the present semester (Spring 1991). There are 9 students in the intermediate recreation and leisure services option, 6 students in the intermediate Spanish for business and professional travelers option, 5 students in the intermediate social services option, 2 students in the intermediate nursing option, and 1 student each in intermediate elementary education, hotel management, physical theraphy, and the airlines emphasis of the travel, recreation, and hospitality program. There are also 2 students in the advanced business option, 1 student in the advanced nursing option, and 1 student in the advanced travel agent emphasis of the travel, recreation, and hospitality program.

Ten of the smaller intermediate and advanced groups of students meet in the Foreigh Language Laboratory. Five bilingual aides meet the tutorial needs of these groups at 3 study tables in the audio part of the laboratory and at 2 study tables in the video and computer laboratory rooms. Each bilingual aide tutors 2 groups during the 50 minute period. The actual amount of time per group depends on the number of students in the group and the ability of the student or students. Some aides set up specific

times during the class hour to work with particular groups while other aides prefer to alternate times, beginning with one group first for one day or week and with their other group first the next day or week. Still other aides work first with whichever group is better prepared on a given day, allowing their group extra time to study before they review, check, or introduce material. Two of the larger intermediate groups - recreational and leisure services, with 9 students, and Spanish for business and professional travelers, with 6 students - meet in the back of the regularly scheduled "extra large" Career Spanish classroom with a sixth bilingual aide assigned to tutor these 2 groups.

Also in the Career Spanish class this spring semester are 16 beginning students in 7 different groups. For the first 8 weeks of the current semester, all 16 of these students were clustered up front in the regularly scheduled classroom for the pre-career, introduction-to-the-language phase of the course as far away as possible from the 2 intermediate groups in opposite corners of the back of this room. However, for the past 3 weeks of the second module of this semester, these 16 students have been separated into 7 groups according to their career interests. The 4 beginning students now meet in the center of the back of the room with their bilingual aide. Three beginning nursing students and 1 beginning radiology student meet with their bilingual aide in 1 corner of the front of the room, and 4 beginning social service majors and 1 beginning elementary education major meet with their bilingual aide in the other corner of the front of the room. The one lone beginning leisure and recreation services

major is tutored at the teacher's desk in the center of the room.

Materials

Materials for the 27 options or emphases within options for Career Spanish students vary greatly in terms of availability, suitability, adequacy, and quantity. In general, materials fall into four classes. The most preferred class consists of materials available from a single commercial source for all three levels of instruction which require little to no supplementation by the teacher. Preferred materials like these are available for 11 of the 27 options or emphases. These include agriculture, automotive services, business, elementary education, engineering, hotel management, medical office secretary, mining-engineering, nursing, secretarial science, and social service. Suitable material is in print for all but 2 of these options; however, for these 2 - elementary education and mining-engineering - materials may be obtained through a used book dealer. Cassette tapes are available for over one-half of these options.

The second class of meterials is slightly less desirable and consists of materials similar to those described above except that they do not cover the advanced level of instruction well and must be supplemented to a lesser or greater degree by the teacher-prepared handouts for maximum effectiveness. This type of material is available for 5 options, including the airline emphasis of travel, recreation, and hospitality option, law enforcement, pre-medicine, restaurant management and Spanish for business and professional travelers. Suitable material is in

print for all of these options except that of pre-medicine, and tapes are available for 3 options out of the 5.

The third class of materials consists of those for which there is no single source of commercially available beginning-level material (much less intermediate or advanced) known to the writer. However, suitable beginning (and only beginning) level materials are found for the options in this category in a number of different sources which may be put on reserve in a college or university library for students to check out and use. Eight options for which materials are available in this way include: emergency medical technician, physical therapy, pre-dentistry, pre-optometry, pre-pharmacy, radiologic technology, recreation and leisure services, and the travel agent emphasis of the travel, recreation and hospitality option. For 3 of these options, enough material is available for 1 module of instruction; for 4 of these options, enough material is available for 1 semester of instruction; and for 1 option, enough material is available for 1 year of instruction. No cassette tapes accompany the material available for these options.

The fourth and final class of materials include those for which materials exist for intermediate and advanced levels of instruction, but not for entry or beginning levels. The options for which this is a problem include child care, petroleum engineering, and pre-law.

Before leaving the subject of materials it needs to be pointed out that all known and available materials have been and still are shared with the students from year-to-year in order to

solicit their input on the suitability of materials for their particular option. Where there is a choice, those materials that have the highest degree of student acceptance as well as linguistic and academic credibility are used. Most of the materials in use today have had anywhere from 5 to 15 years of student and teacher use and approval.

The majority of the material used is bilingual in format to facilitate self-instructional learning, is situationally organized, emphasizes the learning of vocabulary in context, and includes pattern practice and expansion drills, as well as guided and free communicative exchanges. To further streamline the learning process, a distinction is made between active and passive learning of phrases - active phrases are those questions, statements, or commands which students are expected to speak, and passive phrases are those language utterances which students are expected to understand. Thus, the approach is mainly aural-oral with very little or no emphasis on reading and writing.

Options

The number of options offered each quarter or semester has varied over the years from 5 to 22. The first Career Spanish class, for there were some exploratory ones in the early 1970's, was conducted during the fall quarter of 1975 and offered 6 options: Spanish for beginners or reviewers (a pre-career phase of the program for those with no prior experience with or training in Spanish); Spanish for agriculture majors; Spanish for child care majors; Spanish for nursing majors; Spanish for social

service majors; and Spanish for business and professional travelers. This latter option was included at the last moment to increase the number of students and justify offering the course in its infancy. For a number of reasons, this option has remained on the books over the years and still has its share of students.

In 1976, new options were added for elementary education majors and travel, recreation and hospitality majors seeking employment with an airline. In 1978, the year the college changed over to the semester system, new options were added for pre-mining engineering majors and travel, recreation and hospitality majors interested in hotel and/or motel management. In 1979, new options were added for pre-medicine majors and travel, recreation, and hospitality majors interested in becoming travel agents.

In 1980, a new option was added for law enforcement majors. And in 1981, new options were added for business majors, pre-engineering majors with no special field declared, pre-petroleum engineering majors, and general secretarial science majors. From 1982 through 1984, new options were added for pre-optometry majors (1982), emergency medical technician majors (1983), pre-law majors (1984), and radiology technology majors (1984). In 1985 and 1986, new options were added for auto body majors (1985), physical therapy majors (1985), recreation and leisure service majors (1985), and travel, recreation and hospitality majors planning a career in restaurant management (1986). Since 1986, only 2 new options have been added: 1 for

pre-pharmacy majors in 1988 and 1 for medical office secretary majors in 1988.

Methodology

A typical lesson for the airline option might begin with the bilingual aide assuming the role of an airline passenger asking in Spanish where certain items such as the reading light switch, fresh air intake, toilet, or drinking water are located within the cabin of the plane. The student would be expected to give the aide the English equivalents of these items to show that they understand what they are being asked. Then, the aide might give the place expressions for these items in English and have the students give the Spanish equivalents of these expressions. Finally, without any reference to English, the aide must ask in Spanish for the locations of the same items, and the students would reply in Spanish, giving the appropriate locations of the items identified by the aide.

Before the bilingual aide leaves one group to work with another, he or she is expected to model the pronunciation of all vocabulary and phrases in the next day's assignment, to check on the group and individual pronunciation of these items, and to make any needed explanations regarding new forms and/or structures. After the aide leaves the group, the approach is primarily self-instructional with the members of the group pairing up and continuing to quiz each other in the classroom or language laboratory. The group may break up and work independently or as a group elsewhere. In addition to the basic

text or materials, each student is given a schedule of assignments for the semester, a personal copy of the cassette tape for each lesson if the group is small, useful or essential supplementary handouts, and (for some options) additional free materials available from private sources.

Testing

Past experience has shown that students with average apptitude for languages can reasonably be expected to complete most lessons in 4 or 5 class days and be ready for a lesson quiz on the fifth or sixth day of class. Accordingly, each 16 week semester is divided into 8 grading periods during which most of the students are evaluated. Because some of the lessons for a few of the options may take as few as 2 days or as many as 5 or 6 days to complete, some students may be tested twice during a grading period. Others may be excused from testing during one entire grading period if they have not completed an extra long lesson.

All testing is administered orally by the teacher and incorporates the mastery-learning concept. Almost all students are capable of mastering a body of material if it is presented properly and if they are given sufficient time to do so. Students are graded as objectively as possible and are expected to achieve at least an 80 percent level of mastery on each quiz. Any student who has not mastered 80 percent of the material is allowed the opportunity to retake the quiz within 1 week of the original quiz date. However, most students who choose to retake

quizzes do so within a day or 2 in order to achieve the desired mastery and improve their grades. The average of the 2 grades is recorded as the lesson grade in order to encourage maximum effort on the first test. Since most of the Career Spanish students are reasonably well motivated and possess modest language apptitude, the vast majority earn A's or B's on lesson quizzes, multi-lesson quizzes, and for semester grades.

A student may earn a lower grade if he or she has extreme language learning difficulties or if the student takes double or triple the alloted time on a given lesson through either need or neglect and thus fails to complete the predetermined number of assignments during the semester. In these few cases, awarding the student less credit would be preferable to lowering his or her grade, but the flexible credit approach of awarding credit for that portion of the course completed has not been implemented at Mesa State College. The individualization and relative flexibility of the program have allowed a few intermediate and advanced students with special needs to complete the assigned number of lessons in less than a semester. Individualization has also permitted a few advanced students to design the course to suit their particular interest when options for their preferences were not a part of the standard course.

An attempt is made to test students during the class hour whenever possible. However, during most semesters, when the teacher is teaching the pre-career introduction-to-Spanish-option, the first module of the semester, and one or two beginning career options in the second module of the semester,

much testing has to be conducted ouside of class at some other convenient time for the students. Because of the great number of options, and the difficulty of arranging for all the members of each option to be tested at the same time, the teacher usually spends an average of 5 additional hours a week testing various students or groups outside of class. Since this much testing outside of the regularly scheduled class hour has been as distasteful to the teacher as to the students, several alternatives have been considered over the years, but no satisfactory arrangement has been found.

EVALUATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

Likes

In an informal opinion survey conducted at the end of the spring 1989 class, students stated that they like most: the opportunity to focus on career-specific subject matter; the compatibility of group members; their tutors; the opportunity to have a part in choosing texts and lessons; the dual language (bilingual) format of the materials; the books, extra materials, tapes and handouts; the fact that the class was all oral; the emphasis on pronunciation; the enthusiasm of the teacher and aides; the relaxed atmosphere; the independence given to work on their own; the chance to retake tests; the individualized instruction; the freedom to choose topics; the informality of the class; the flexible course schedule and structure; working at their own pace; working in small groups; and the "peer" teacher

concept. One student reported: "Students feel more comfortable with peers. They are not so intimidated and feel freer to ask for help. They learn more."

Problems

Students identified as problems: the lack of commitment on the part of some of the students in their groups; an aide who did not seem to care and was not challenging; the unavailability of help ("There are too many groups and levels; none of us get the help we should."); the non-productiveness of the time when the aides were not with groups; the long, difficult, and expensive text; the overly long, pre-career introduction to Spanish; the scheduling of tests outside of class; the excessive amount of time the teacher spent with the beginners; the cold room; the large number of groups which divide the teacher's attention; the repetitiveness of some of the exercises; the shortness of time in which to learn a lot; the oral quizzes; not knowing what each word meant; the illegible mimeograph copies; the high level of noise in the room; the boredom of working alone; the slow pace; and the fast pace.

Needs

Students identified as major needs: more tapes for some options; more Spanish-speaking aides; more attention from the instructor to each group within the class - student aides cannot always answer questions that arise; more informal conversation apart from the "scripted" lessons; more review of past lessons;

more introductory grammar; upper-division opportunities for a higher level of Career Spanish; a reduction in the number of options to increase the efficiency of instruction and learning; a reduction in the amount of time spent getting all the options going at the beginning of class; better tapes that don't go so fast and allow time for students to repeat what is said; more rooms so that everyone is not trying to learn in the same room; field trips to the hospital and other places where Spanish is spoken; and material that is more applied and "field" oriented.

Resolution

Attempts are made continuously to address student concerns and make improvements where possible. The selection of aides is very carefully made; yet, sometimes we misjudge personality and temperment and end up, for a semester, with someone unsuited to tutoring. The pre-career introductory pronunciation, basic vocabulary and grammar phases of the program are reviewed every year and changes are made wherever and whenever possible. To counter reputed unproductiveness of some groups, the students are involved in the selection of material and the design of their own programs. The schedules of assignments are given back to them as soon as possible in order to get all the members in a group started off on the right foot and together within a few days of the opening of the semester. No group is ever left unattended without having been given some assignment to complete in the absence of an aide. Suggestions are made for ways in which an aide can get away from the script when the opportunity presents

itself in order to practice the language less artificially. Partners are found for "one person" groups to solve the problem of working alone for students who are troubled by this. Difficult material is constantly "easified" through the use of supplements with alternate explanations or exercises.

But there are some problems and needs that will have to go unmet, at least for the present. There is no present way to schedule all tests during the class hour. There is no money available in the printing budget for Xeroxing supplements, so the poorer quality mimeographed handouts have to be used. Nor is there time to remake commercially prepared tapes that are "too fast." Nor are we able to secure additional rooms so each group can work in privacy. The "cold" room, says the Maintenance Department, is inherent in its construction. All proposals for upper-division additions have been put on hold because of budgetary constraints. Some consideration has been given to students' concerns about the large number of groups and their affect upon the efficiency and effectiveness of instruction and learning, but to date, we have not seen fit to reduce the number of offerings since the original intent of the class was to offer maximum flexibility. The time requirement for "beginners" cannot be reduced. However, these "weaknesses" in the program are being addressed and all possible strategies to lessen or elimante them are being examined.

SUCCESS

In spite of all the above problems and needs, students also report some success stories. Some describe opportunities they had to use Spanish "on the job while they were still taking the class. One intermediate law enforcement student, in his second semester of Career Spanish, wrote: "I broke up a fight between two Spanish-speaking men and while I could not converse freely with them, I was able to follow the gist of what they were saying, and the situation was resolved." A beginning nursing student with no prior training in Spanish stated: "In starting an IV on a Spanish-speaking man, I was able to tell him what I was going to do, and it lowered his anxiety level." Another beginning nursing student with one year of high school Spanish before Career Spanish commented: "When repositioning or caring for the needs of Spanish-speaking patients, I understand their requests better." A student in the intermediate education option who had had the beginning level course the previous spring said: "I worked in the migrant education program last summer, and just the limited amount I had learned last spring helped me communicate with the chldren. Without it, the teaching situation would have been much more difficult."

A student in the advanced social service option wrote: "I now speak to the clients in Spanish when they call on the phone." Another student in the intermediate law enforcement option declared: "By the end of the fall semester, I was able to follow what a Spanish-speaking person 'meant' in a high stress

situation. Not always what he said, but what he meant." Another student in the beginning education option with no previous Spanish remarked: "I was able to 'pretty much' understand a paper that a Spanish-speaking student in a middle school wrote in Spanish. He was very pleased and surprised at my being able to do this." A beginning nursing student with one quarter of high school Spanish before Career Spanish confessed: "I did not try to speak it on my own, but I was able to read the instructions to the patient." Another student in the intermediate nursing option who had had the beginning option the fall semester wrote: "I can understand and ask in Spanish many more things of my patients, especially in the area of subjective (patient reported) assessment data. And finally, another student in the intermediate law enforcement option stated: "I was able to fill out a basic police report about a Spanish-speaking person."

Favorable "testimonies" about the Career Spanish class are not limited to students currently enrolled in class. In a survey conducted in December 1990, graduates of the class who had had no additional training in Spanish either prior or subsequent to taking the Career Spanish class responded as follows: Christine Irwin, a hotel night clerk following graduation, took one semester of the travel, recreation, and hospitality option in 1984. Ms. Irwin reported occasional opportunities to use Spanish at a hotel in Pueblo, Colorado. She wrote that her ability to use Spanish to talk to Spanish-speaking guests was "entirely due to the Career Spanish class." Marsha Franklin, a registered nurse for 3 years since graduation, took one semester of the

beginning nursing option in 1988. She reports occasional opportunities to use Spanish on the job at Saint Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction. She attributes her ability to give simple commands and ask simple questions solely to Career Spanish. She writes, "Patients are relieved to find someone that can understand and help them in their own language. They are notably less anxious." She adds, "Even if the patients speak English, they appreciate a few words of Spanish."

Nancy Dutcher, a fruit grower for the past 7 years, took one semester of the beginning agricultural option in 1982. She reports using Spanish on a daily basis during summers instructing workers on what needs to be done each day. Ms. Dutcher states that Career Spanish provided a good beginning to expand upon. She adds, "My workers teach me additional vocabulary." Jim Pitts, a psychiatric supervisor at the Grand Junction Regional Center, had one semester of the social service option. With the exception of some "street" Spanish he picked up before college, he also attributes his ability to speak with the Spanish staff and clients solely to the Career Spanish class. He writes, "It aids my relationships with them." Finally, Carolyn (Cooper) O'Brien, a probation officer in Denver, also with no previous or subsequent study of Spanish, took one semester of the beginning social services option in 1984. She reports occasional opportunities to use Spanish on a limited basis with Spanish-speaking clients. She also credits the Career Spanish class for her ability to "assess whether court testimony is being translated in an unbiased manner." Ms. O'Brien adds, "I still

have all the tapes and handouts and have reviewed them on occasion and have lent them to others. I'm surprised at how much I learned in such a short time."

Even students who had studied Spanish prior to taking Career Spanish state that the Career Spanish class helped them a great deal in learning the vocabulary and expressions needed on the job. Janet Grant, a nurse and midwife, had 2 years of high school Spanish prior to Career Spanish and lived in Ecuador 1 year. She took one semester of the intermediate nursing option in 1979. She reports frequent opportunities to use Spanish on the job as a nurse in the hospital and as a midwife with migrant workers. She writes, "Career Spanish was a considerable help to me in assisting Spanish-speaking women give birth with a caring provider and in enhancing their experience in a foreign country." Tony Lopez, a staff nurse at Saint Mary's hospital in Grand Junction, had 4 years of high school Spanish between 1964 and 1968 prior to taking 2 semesters of the beginning and intermediate nursing options. Mr. Lopez states that he has occasional opportunities to use the language in the ICU. He attributes his ability to communicate with ICU patients solely to Career Spanish. He writes, "I couln't have communicated with those patients in the hospital without the Career Spanish training at Mesa."

Finally, Bill Fariello, a law enforcement officer, had 4 years of Spanish in grade school and 3 years in high school in San Antonio before taking 2 semesters of the intermediate and advanced law enforcement options in 1986. He reports frequent

opportunities to use the language in 8 different situations: explaining sobriety test maneuvers, booking prisoners, taking a report in the field, contacting suspicious individuals, translating for non-Spanish-speaking officers, determing the legal residency status of aliens, assisting Spanish speakers to file reports for claims or crimes, and interviewing witnesses to a crime. Even with his extensive background in Spanish, he reports that his ability to converse in his field is "to a great extent due to Career Spanish." He adds:

> I noticed that Spanish-speaking people became much more relaxed and cooperative when they discovered they could speak in their native tongue instead of struggling to find the right word in English. I found that Spanish-speaking people don't generally feel the system can or will help them, and their attitude changes considerably when they can converse with someone in their own language.

ADAPTABILITY OF THE PROGRAM AT OTHER SCHOOLS

Although the Career Spanish course was designed for Mesa State College as a junior college, the success of the course at the college as a baccalaureate degree-granting institution demonstrates that the course is a valid program in a 4 year school. The needs that students, as well as members of the community, have for these special-interest, limited-objective options are present in both environments.

A program similar to the Career Spanish course at Mesa State College could be initiated in any other school, depending on: 1) the committment of the Spanish teacher to the career concept, 2) curriculum committee approval, 3) departmental or divisional ability and willingness to employ the necessary aides, 4) the availability of qualified aides, 5) the interest of students in a vocationally oriented Spanish course, 6) the availability of materials for those options in which there is interest, 7) the teacher's ability to direct and manage large groups of students working independently, 8) the effect of such a class on other existing Spanish language classes, and 9) the means to properly publicize and promote the program.

The increased enrollment in the class at Mesa State College over the years, the low attrition rate, above-average grades of the students, and results of student opinion surveys all indicate, in general, a positive response to the class. And, although options for several hundred students enrolled in vocational-technical programs have yet to be developed, it is estimated that with the addition of Career Spanish as it presently exists, the entire Spanish program of the College is meeting the needs of approximately 90 percent of those major fields in which the language is deemed especially suited to serve as compared with only 25 percent 15 years ago. For any school which questions whether it is providing opportunites for Spanish language instruction for <u>all</u> students, rather than for just a fraction, the Career Spanish concept is highly recommended.